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SUBJECT: MEDIA REACTION REPORT - IRAN INTERNATIONAL TERRORISM
- IRAQ

PARIS - MONDAY, JUNE 27, 2005

(A) SUBJECTS COVERED IN TODAY'S REPORT:

- [1](#)1. IRAN
- [1](#)2. INTERNATIONAL TERRORISM - IRAQ

B) SUMMARY OF COVERAGE:

THE ELECTION IN IRAN OF AN "ULTRA CONSERVATIVE" IS OVERWHELMINGLY SEEN AS "A CHALLENGE TO THE WEST" (LE FIGARO); "A POPULIST STEP BACKWARDS" (LIBERATION) BUT ALSO "MORE OF THE SAME" FOR CATHOLIC LA CROIX, WHICH TITLES ITS EDITORIAL "IRANIAN CONTINUITY." COMMENTARIES AND EDITORIAL LINES ASSERT THE VOTE WAS A REACTION TO SOCIAL DIFFICULTIES SUCH AS UNEMPLOYMENT (LIBERATION) AND REPRESENTS A "THREAT TO THE PEOPLE OF IRAN AND THE WORLD." (LE FIGARO) THE RESUMPTION AND OUTCOME OF THE NEGOTIATIONS BETWEEN THE PARIS 3 AND IRAN ARE WIDELY DEBATED, AS ARE THE "LIMITED CHOICES LEFT TO WASHINGTON." (SEE PART C)

SEVERAL EXPERTS ARE INTERVIEWED ON THE IRANIAN ELECTIONS. IN LEFT-OF-CENTER LE MONDE, NUCLEAR EXPERT BRUNO TERTRAIS FROM THE FOUNDATION FOR STRATEGIC RESEARCH: "THE NEGOTIATIONS WILL PROBABLY HAVE TO START FROM SCRATCH BECAUSE THE NEW PRESIDENT WILL HARDLY KEEP THE SAME TEAM OF NEGOTIATORS. AHMADINEJAD HAS THE SUPPORT OF GROUPS WHO WANT IRAN TO POSSESS NUCLEAR ARMS. THIS ELECTION IS SURE TO LAUNCH NEW TENSION WITH WASHINGTON. BUT THE THREAT OF A U.S. MILITARY INTERVENTION HAS NOT BECOME GREATER. BEFORE ANY SUCH MEASURE IS TAKEN, THE U.S. WILL WANT TO GO BEFORE THE UNSC."

INTERNATIONAL TERRORISM AND IRAQ ARE TWO ADDITIONAL INTERNATIONAL STORIES. SEVERAL OUTLETS REPORT ON THE ACKNOWLEDGMENT BY THE U.S. OF "TALKS WITH IRAQI INSURGENTS." FOR POPULAR RIGHT-OF-CENTER FRANCE SOIR IT IS A "U.S. ADMISSION OF WEAKNESS." FOR LE PARISIEN, "IT IS A FIRST AND IT COULD MARK A TURNING POINT IN THE WAR." (SEE PART C)

LEFT-OF-CENTER LE MONDE CARRIES A FRONT-PAGE STORY ABOUT NEW CONCERNS ABOUT TERRORISM IN FRANCE AND IN EUROPE BECAUSE OF "SIGNS OF TIES BETWEEN ALGERIAN SALAFIST GROUPS AND AL-ZARQAWI; THE IMMINENT RELEASE OF FORMER TERRORIST JAILED IN FRANCE FOR TERRORISM ACTS IN THE 90'S AND RETURNING 'FRENCH DJIHADISTS' FROM IRAQ." PIOTR SMOLAR PENS A COMMENTARY TITLED: "THE MUTATION OF ISLAMIC TERRORISM." (SEE PART C) EUROPEAN COORDINATOR FOR ANTI-TERRORISM GIJS DE VRIES IS INTERVIEWED IN LE MONDE: "EUROPE IS NO LONGER JUST A LOGISTICAL AND SUPPORT CENTER FOR TERRORISM. IT HAS ALSO BECOME A PRIME TARGET. THE EU AND THE U.S. MUST WORK TOGETHER. IT IS IN THE EU'S INTEREST THAT IRAQ BECOME STABLE. MUCH WILL DEPEND ON THE FATE OF THAT NATION. THIS IS WHY THE EU SUPPORTS THAT COUNTRY'S CONSTITUTIONAL PROCESS. THE AMERICANS MUST TAKE RESPONSIBILITY FOR THEIR ACTIONS IN RESOLVING REGIONAL CONFLICTS WHICH NURTURE JIHAD."

(C) SUPPORTING TEXT/BLOCK QUOTES:

IRAN

"IRAN STEPS BACKWARDS"

PIERRE ROUSSELIN IN RIGHT-OF-CENTER LE FIGARO (06/27): "THE ELECTION OF AN ULTRA CONSERVATIVE IN IRAN DOES NOT HERALD ANYTHING GOOD FOR THE COUNTRY OR THE WEST. FOR THE IRANIANS THE IMMEDIATE FUTURE IS GHASTLY. WITH WOMEN THE FIRST VICTIMS. THE ELECTION ALSO SOUNDS THE DEATH KNEEL FOR REFORM. BUT BECAUSE OF IRAN'S ECONOMIC SITUATION AND ITS HIGH UNEMPLOYMENT, SUCH A POPULIST VOTE IS NOT ALL THAT SURPRISING. FOR THE REST OF THE WORLD THE ELECTION IS A HARBINGER OF MANY THREATS. WITH AN IDEOLOGUE IN POWER IN TEHRAN, THE WAGER AIMING TO RE-INCLUDE IRAN IN THE INTERNATIONAL COMMUNITY IN EXCHANGE FOR ITS GIVING UP THE BOMB BECOMES ALL THE MORE DELICATE BUT NO LESS VITAL."

"SOCIAL ANGER"

JEAN-MICHEL HELVIG IN LEFT-OF-CENTER LIBERATION (06/27): "THE BALLOTS WERE USED TO EXPRESS SOCIAL ANGER. THE PEOPLE OF IRAN HAVE SENT A MESSAGE TO THE POWERS THAT BE. THE WINNER IS NOT IRAN AS THE FIGHTER AGAINST RELIGIOUS OBSCURANTISM. THE

IRANIANS HAVE CHOSEN MEN WHO RESEMBLE THEM AS OPPOSED TO MEN WHO WANT TO LOOK LIKE FOREIGNERS. IRAN SEEMS BENT ON NATIONALISTIC WITHDRAWAL. THE FAILURE IS PATENT FOR IRAN'S POLITICAL REFORMISTS."

"IRANIAN CONTINUITY"

GUILLAUME GOUBERT IN CATHOLIC LA CROIX (06/27): "WHILE A SECULAR FIGURE FOLLOWS A RELIGIOUS FIGURE, IT IS STILL THE AYATOLLAH' KHAMENI'S POLICY LINE THAT HAS WON. THIS IS NOT GOOD NEWS FOR FREEDOM FOR IRANIAN MEN AND WOMEN. IT IS NOT GOOD NEWS FOR INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS IN A REGION THAT NEEDS NO ADDITIONAL SOURCE OF TENSION. AND IT IS NOT GOOD NEWS FOR THE DIALOGUE BETWEEN CIVILIZATIONS. STILL, WE MUST NOT OVER-DRAMATIZE THE CHANGES OCCURRING IN IRAN. IN REALITY, WHAT PREDOMINATES, IS CONTINUITY, WITH THE IRANIANS HAVING VOTED FOR SOCIAL AND ECONOMIC IMPROVEMENTS RATHER THAN FOR ONE REGIME OVER ANOTHER. THERE MAY BE A HARSHENING OF IRANIAN IDEOLOGY. SOME IN IRAN AND AMONG AMERICAN CONSERVATIVES COULD BE TEMPTED TO REJOICE OVER THIS, BELIEVING THAT THE REGIME'S UNPOPULARITY WILL HASTEN ITS DEMISE. THIS IS CALLED ADOPTING A STRATEGY OF THE WORST. WE MUST RESIST AGAINST IT AND CONTINUE TO DIALOGUE WITH TEHRAN."

"WASHINGTON EMBARRASSED"

JEAN-LOUIS TURLIN IN RIGHT-OF-CENTER LE FIGARO (06/27): "MIREN IN IRAQ, PRESIDENT BUSH DOES NOT POSSESS THE MEANS TO USE MIGHT TO CHANGE THE MIDDLE EAST. IN FACT, HIS STRONG-ARM RHETORIC SEEMS TO HAVE PLAYED MORE INTO THE HANDS OF THE RELIGIOUS MULLAHS THAN HIS OWN. WASHINGTON'S OFFICIAL DECLARATIONS BARELY HIDE THE EMBARRASSMENT OF A GOVERNMENT WITH FEW OPTIONS LEFT. WASHINGTON, BECAUSE IT IS FACING A POPULIST PRESIDENT WHO EARNED HIS CREDENTIALS DURING THE 1979 HOSTAGE-TAKING SITUATION, COULD BE TEMPTED WITH A NO-CONCESSION POSITION. AHMADINEJAD'S ARRIVAL COULD WELL STRENGTHEN THE POSITION OF WASHINGTON'S HAWKS WHO ARE DIVIDED OVER IRAQ. THE BUSH ADMINISTRATION'S POSITION WILL BE ONE OF 'WAIT AND SEE' BECAUSE IT HAS NO OTHER CHOICE."

"A HARSHER POSITION FROM THE U.S. TO BE EXPECTED"

PASCAL RICHE IN LEFT-OF-CENTER LIBERATION (06/27): "THE ELECTION OF AHMADINEJAD IS A HARSH BLOW FOR PRESIDENT BUSH AND HIS PLANS FOR THE MIDDLE EAST. FUNDAMENTALISTS IN IRAN ARE HOLDING ALL THE CARDS AND PRESIDENT BUSH MUST BE READY FOR A TOUGHER CONFRONTATION BETWEEN THE U.S. AND IRAN. HE MUST ALSO BEWARE OF THE FACT THAT THIS RELIGIOUS HARD-LINE POSITION COULD SPREAD IN THE REGION. THIS WOULD BE THE EXACT OPPOSITE OF HIS STRATEGY'S OBJECTIVES FOR THE 'GREATER MIDDLE EAST.'"

INTERNATIONAL TERRORISM - IRAQ

"BUSH AND THE BALANCE SHEET OF ERRORS"

GILLES DELAFON IN RIGHT-OF-CENTER-LE JOURNAL DU DIMANCHE (06/27): "THE PENTAGON'S HAWKS THOUGHT THEY WOULD UPROOT TERRORISM; INSTEAD THEY HAVE SOWN THE SEED OF TERRORISM. THEIR BATTLE FOR DEMOCRACY GOT LOST SOMEWHERE IN THE PRISONS OF ABU GHARAIB AND GUANTANAMO. AROUND THE WORLD, AND IN ALL LOGIC, THE IMAGE OF THE U.S. IS NOT IMPROVING. THE LATEST POLL SHOWS THAT IN FRANCE, CHINA IS MORE POPULAR THAN THE U.S.! THESE AMERICAN SETBACKS LEAVE THE EUROPEANS RUDDERLESS. LAST WEEK THEY MADE COMMITMENTS TOWARDS IRAQ WHICH THEY WILL BE HARD-PRESSED TO HONOR IF WASHINGTON REFUSES TO ACKNOWLEDGE ITS MISTAKES AND LEARN FROM ITS ERRORS."

"THE U.S. MEETS WITH IRAQI INSURGENTS"

IN LEFT-OF-CENTER LIBERATION (06/27): "MEETINGS BETWEEN AMERICAN OFFICIALS AND IRAQI INSURGENTS HAVE INDEED TAKEN PLACE. SECRETARY RUMSFELD HAS AS MUCH AS ADMITTED THAT THE WAR WOULD NOT BE WON BY HIS OWN TROOPS..."

"IN IRAQ, A DIALOGUE FULL OF TRAPS"

LAKHDAR BELAID IN RIGHT-OF-CENTER FRANCE SOIR (06/27): "WHILE ACTS OF VIOLENCE IN IRAQ GROW, WASHINGTON RECENTLY CONFIRMED THE INFORMATION REVEALED BY THE SUNDAY TIMES ABOUT TALKS WITH IRAQI INSURGENTS. CAN SUCH A STRATEGY BEAR FRUIT? IT IS AS IF THE AMERICANS WERE LITERALLY EXPOSING THEIR WEAKNESS. ACCORDING TO DOMINIQUE TOMAS, A MIDDLE EAST EXPERT, AUTHOR OF 'AL QAEDA'S MEN,' 'IF THE AMERICANS HAVE INDEED MET WITH INSURGENTS, IT IS PROOF OF THEIR OWN FAILURE.' BUT AT THE SAME TIME, WITH THESE OFFERS OF TALKS, WASHINGTON MAY BE HOPING TO DIVIDE AND CONQUER. MEANWHILE IN IRAQ, AND IN SPITE OF AMERICAN REPRESSION, VIOLENT OPERATIONS ARE INTENSIFYING. THIS OFFER OF DIALOGUE COULD THEREFORE LEAD TO EVEN MORE VIOLENCE."

"THE MUTATIONS OF ISLAMIC TERRORISM"

PIOTR SMOLAR IN LEFT-OF-CENTER LE MONDE (06/27): "THE U.S. IS PRISONER OF GUANTANAMO. SUDDENLY CLOSING THE BASE WOULD BE AN ADMISSION OF FAILURE, SOMETHING THAT IS POLITICALLY INSUFFERABLE. BUT THE EUROPEANS SHOULD NOT REJOICE OVER AMERICA'S DIFFICULTIES. THE WORRISOME MUTATION OF THE TERRORIST THREAT - DUE ESSENTIALLY TO THE MIREN IRAQI SITUATION - AND WASHINGTON'S NEED TO GIVE SIGNS OF OPENNESS HAVE LED TO A RAPPROCHEMENT BETWEEN THE U.S. AND EUROPE AS ILLUSTRATED IN FLORENCE AT THE END OF MAY. THE DELICATE POLITICAL POSITION OF THE U.S. WAS OBVIOUS, AS WAS THE VULNERABILITY OF EUROPE. TERRORISM EXPERTS IN FLORENCE ACKNOWLEDGED THE WORRISOME MUTATION OF ISLAMIC TERRORISM. IRAQ

HOLDS A CENTRAL ROLE IN THE ALARMING ANALYSIS OF THIS
MUTATION. OF COURSE AMERICANS AND EUROPEANS HAVE DIVERGING
POSITIONS IN THE ANALYSES OF THE ROOT CAUSES OF THIS EVIL.
SEEN FROM THE U.S., EUROPE IS A RESERVOIR FOR `JIHADDISTS' WHO
CHOOSE TO GO TO IRAQ. SEEN FROM EUROPE, EXPERTS CONTEND THAT
IRAQ HAS BECOME THE LAND OF JIHAD BECAUSE OF THE SYMBOLISM
ATTACHED TO A CONFRONTATION WITH THE U.S. IN THE LAND OF
ISLAM." WOLFF